

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. Claims 1-4 are the same as the claims rejected in the now-abandoned parent application serial no. 09/479,429. English translations of the foreign references cited in the parent application are appended hereto. Allowance of the claims is requested in view of the following remarks.

New claims 5-16 have been added. Claim 5 recites a hockey stick including limitations similar to those of claim 2, and further recites a detachable blade having a defined region in the upper portion of the blade including an outer concave surface on at least one of a front side and a back side of the upper portion. Claim 11 recites a hockey stick including limitations similar to those of claim 2, and further recites that the upper portion of the blade includes an outer concave surface region having a reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade.

Claim 6 recites a hockey stick blade having an upper portion dimensioned to be detachably mated to a hockey stick shaft, wherein the upper portion includes an outer concave surface on at least one of a front side and a back side of the upper portion.

Dependent claims 7-10 and 12-16 include limitations similar to those included in the originally filed and new claims, as well as other limitations supported in the application.

Turning to the substance of the art cited in the parent application, Sweet discloses a shaft with a blade wherein:

“the portion of the blade between the points 23 and 24 at the base of the tongue 14 has *recesses* 27 and 28 on opposite sides which are of *uniform* depth. Both of the sides forming the bottom of the recesses 27 and 28 are in sloping relation to each other and lightens the blade while providing reinforcing flanges 31 within the shank which substantially strengthens

the portion of the blade below the tongue so that it will withstand the forces applied to the blade when the puck is struck” (col. 4, lines 41-49).

Sweet does not disclose a *concave* region in an upper portion of a blade, but instead teaches a recess having a *uniform* depth in both sides of a blade. A concave surface, by definition, does not have a uniform depth, but instead has a greater depth at its center than at its outer edges. Thus, the structure disclosed in Sweet is completely different than that of the claimed invention.

Additionally, Sweet teaches the use of reinforcing flanges to substantially strengthen the blade so that it will withstand forces applied to the blade by the puck. There is no mention in Sweet of a concave or defined region having a *reduced* longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade. On the contrary, Sweet discloses recesses that are defined in part by reinforcing flange portions which act to provide *increased* strength to the blade. Thus, the recessed portions/reinforcing flanges of the blade in Sweet form an entirely different structure, which is designed to accomplish an entirely different objective, than the concave or defined region of the claimed invention.

With respect to Malmberg, the reference discloses a hockey stick that:

“has made it possible to make the part 3 [of the shaft] weaker than has been the case in the prior art...[t]he weakening of the part 3 has been accomplished through the removal of concave regions 5 of material from the part 3” (translation, p. 2). The stick further includes:

“a reinforcement device 4, which is arranged such that it stiffens the shaft 1 when the part 3 has been deflected an amount for the purpose of shock-absorbing spring action” (translation, p. 2).

The concave portion in Malmberg is located on the *shaft* of the hockey stick, not on the *blade*, as claimed. Moreover, Malmberg does not teach the concavity structure absent an exterior reinforcement sleeve that is used to stiffen the shaft when the weakened part of the *shaft* has been deflected for the purpose of shock-absorption. There is no mention in Malmberg of a concave or defined region on a *blade* having a reduced longitudinal bending stiffness in a direction generally perpendicular to the face of the blade. Thus, Malmberg teaches an entirely different structure used for an entirely different purpose than that of the claimed invention.

With respect to Spath, the reference discloses a:

“hockey club [that] consists of the handle A and the hitting part B”  
wherein “a flat part C is provided between the two parts thus flexibly  
*connecting* the two parts A and B” (translation, p. 1).

Spath is directed to a one-piece field hockey stick having a region C that *connects* the “blade” B to the “shaft” A. Thus, region C is not located on the “blade” of the stick, and it does not include a concave surface. On the contrary, region C is “a flat part.” Accordingly, Spath discloses an entirely different structure than that of the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is requested.

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